Modesty Beyond the Screen

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The digital world is not something separate from real life. It is part of it, fully embedded in it. It has become a true arena where reputations are built or destroyed, where values are spread or erased, and where identities are shaped in ways that can either preserve or corrupt a person. Yet many Muslim women act as if they have been granted some kind of exemption in this space, interacting with social media as though it exists outside the boundaries of faith, as if actions there carry no weight and no consequence.

In reality, this matter goes far beyond a simple post, a photo, or a comment. It is about preserving dignity and protecting the modesty that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, described as a branch of faith.
It requires understanding concealment in its fullest sense. This is not limited to clothing. It extends to one's voice, image, behavior, character, and the manner in which one engages with others.

Many people reduce concealment to a headscarf alone, believing that once the body is covered, the obligation is fulfilled and everything else is separate.
This is a serious misunderstanding.
Concealment, both linguistically and in religious law, is far broader. It carries the meaning of protection and avoiding unnecessary attention. In Shar'ī terms, it includes proper covering and refraining from any form of display before those who should not see a woman. It is about guarding oneself from becoming an object of public exposure.

The Quran highlights this principle regarding the wives of the Prophet ﷺ (and by extension, all believing women):
"**And abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance.**"
[Al-Ahzab: 33:33]

Ibn Kathir explained in his Tafsir that this "display" includes a woman walking out in front of men or showing her beauty. Today, "walking out" has taken a new form through posting, yet the principle remains unchanged. The means have evolved, but the ruling does not.

The root of Tabarruj is to appear and to draw attention to oneself. It is not limited to clothing. It includes anything that makes a person prominent in the eyes of others. The digital world is built on being seen and heard. When a woman shares her image, her voice, or the details of her life, she is placing herself before countless eyes. Among those eyes are people who are not trustworthy, and people

whose hearts carry sickness. This reality is clear and cannot be denied.

Does a Niqāb Suffice in Front of the Camera?

A common misunderstanding has spread among some practicing women, the idea that appearing in a Niqāb or full modest dress in front of a camera makes that appearance permissible or even praiseworthy. This requires honest reflection.

The Hijāb or Niqāb was legislated to conceal a woman from view, not to facilitate her presence in it. Its purpose is protection and distance from the public gaze. When it becomes a means of gaining visibility or recognition, its function is reversed. It turns from a shield into a display. Even if a woman is fully covered, presenting herself before a camera for unrelated men to view introduces a level of exposure that conflicts with the spirit of modesty.

This becomes more complicated when it is justified under the claim of Da'wah. Saying "I appear in my veil to invite others to Allāh" may sound sincere, but it often confuses intention with method. A noble goal does not justify an impermissible path. The scholars have always been clear that righteous objectives must be pursued through righteous means.

One must ask honestly, what does an image add that words cannot? The greatest scholars in our history reached hearts and changed lives through knowledge, sincerity, and speech, not through their faces. To claim that modern outreach depends on visual presence is not necessity, it is desire. It is a subtle way in which Shaytan beautifies something personal and presents it as worship.

This also sends a dangerous message, that modesty and public visibility can comfortably coexist. Over time, this weakens the very meaning of modesty in the hearts of people.

Modesty with Strangers

Perhaps the most neglected aspect of this issue is how women interact with unrelated men online.

It has become common to see women, even those representing religious content, engaging with men in a casual and familiar tone in comment sections. This is not something small. One of the quiet doors that Shaytan opens is the desire to be perceived as likable, witty, or entertaining in the eyes of men. What seems harmless can quickly become a means of lowering boundaries.

Humor is not neutral. It builds familiarity and closeness. When it is used publicly with men, it begins to erode the barrier that Islām has placed for protection. Laughing responses, sarcasm, or playful exchanges create a tone that invites further engagement and weakens modesty.

Allāh says:
"**So do not be soft in speech [to men], lest he in whose heart is a disease should covet, but speak with appropriate speech."**
[Al-Ahzab: 32]

Scholars explained that a woman's speech with unrelated men should be clear, firm, and free from softness or flirtation. Being seen as humorous or charming may attract followers, but it also invites a level of familiarity that should not exist.

Similarly, **public arguments with men under the banner of defending the truth are often mistaken for Da'wah.** While the intention may be good, the approach is flawed. Entering heated debates places a woman in a position of confrontation that conflicts with the dignity and modesty she is commanded to preserve.
The righteous women of the past sought knowledge with

composure and dignity. They did not engage in public disputes or seek visibility in spaces dominated by men. Their honor was in their restraint, their knowledge, and their character, not in their presence.

When a woman adopts harsh argumentation or casual familiarity with strangers, she risks losing the very qualities that elevate her. Modesty, dignity, gentleness, and natural shyness are not weaknesses. They are strengths that must be protected.
True femininity is not found in visibility, but in preservation.

My dear sisters in Allāh, take these words as a sincere reminder. They are not written from a place of superiority, but from concern and care for this Ummah. We are all tested by these platforms, and we all need reminders.

We live in a time that constantly pushes the idea that your worth is measured by how many people see you. But true honor lies in how well you protect yourself from those who have no right to see you.

Fear Allāh in private just as you do in public. Every image shared and every word written will stand as a witness for you or against you on the Day of Judgment.
Do not exchange lasting dignity for temporary attention. The approval of people is fleeting, but the pleasure of your Creator brings a peace that nothing else can match.

Have the strength to be unknown to the people of this world while being known to the inhabitants of the heavens.

If there is content you have shared that does not reflect the modesty of a believing woman, then remove it for the sake of Allāh. This is a moment for honesty with yourself. Ask yourself what your presence truly achieves, who it benefits, and who it may harm.

And Allāh is the source of help, and in Him we place our trust.

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